

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 3129

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 25, 2008

Title: An act relating to support for online learning for high school students to earn college credit.

Brief Description: Regarding online learning programs for high school students to earn college credit.

Sponsors: House Committee on App Subcom Ed (originally sponsored by Representatives Schmick, Anderson, Quall, Simpson and Ormsby).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/15/08, 94-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education:2/20/08, 2/25/08 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Eide, Hobbs, Holmquist, Kauffman, McDermott, Oemig, Rasmussen, Weinstein and Zarelli.

Staff: Roman Dixon (786-7438)

Background: The Running Start program created in 1990 to expand educational options for students allows eleventh and twelfth grade students to take college courses to satisfy high school graduation requirements as well as earn college credit. Since 1992, all community and technical colleges are required to offer Running Start. Currently, Running Start is offered at Washington's 34 community and technical colleges, and at Washington State, Eastern Washington and Central Washington Universities, Evergreen State College and Northwest Indian College.

Online courses are also now available. Online coursework and virtual campuses make Running Start more accessible to students in remote areas and allows students to access college courses from their high school campuses. For example, WashingtonOnline is a virtual campus that facilitates new collaborations among colleges in order to improve the educational system of Washington State for students who would otherwise not have educational opportunities. Digital Learning Commons is a nonprofit organization established to improve access to educational opportunities and learning resources by providing high-quality educational materials, online courses, and technology tools for Washington's students, teachers, and parents.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must compile information about online learning programs for high school students to earn college credit and place the information on its web site. In addition, OSPI must use the expertise of the Digital Learning Commons and WashingtonOnline to provide assistance and suggest resources.

School districts must then provide general information about Running Start online courses available at community and technical colleges and other state institutions of higher education to all pupils in grades ten, eleven, and twelve and the parents and guardians of those pupils.

High schools must ensure that teachers and counselors have information about online learning programs for high school students to earn college credit and are able to assist parents and students in accessing the information. High schools must also ensure that parents and students have the opportunity to learn about online learning programs. Those programs include, but are not limited to, the Running Start program, Advanced Placement Courses authorized by the College board, Digital Learning Commons, University of Washington extension, WashingtonOnline and other programs and providers that meet the statutory qualifications.

The bill contains a null and void clause.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): Adds advanced placement courses authorized by the college board to the list of online programs for high school students to earn college credit.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Second Substitute Bill: PRO: This bill ensures that parents, guardians, and kids know what programs are out there and that the information is available to those who need it. The State Board of Community and Technical Colleges support this bill and highlight the efforts of Running Start and WashingtonOnline. During 2006-07, almost 14,000 students were involved in Running Start.

OTHER: OSPI is supportive of dual credit programs; however, our concern is OSPI's duty to compile the information. OSPI would have the role of monitoring the program. Initially, I thought I could do the update myself within the scope of my duties. However, I can't under the expanded bill. As such, OSPI will be amending the fiscal note accordingly.

We have a request for an amendment that specifically mentions advanced placement students. In addition, we are concerned about the cost of online material and how our schools are able to access it.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Schmick, prime sponsor; Tiffany Merkel-Rinke, Cable Green, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Marcia Fromhold, Evergreen School District MAPS.

OTHER: Brian Jeffries, OSPI.